



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
Aug. 27, 2013

For More Information, Contact:  
Dr. John Baird, Field Medical Officer  
Dr. Terry Dwelle, State Health Officer or  
North Dakota Department of Health  
Phone: 701.328.2372

### **State Health Department Offers Hot Weather Safety Tips**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Because of extremely high temperatures across North Dakota this week, the state health department is urging everyone to take precautions to protect their health, according to Dr. Terry Dwelle, state health officer for the North Dakota Department of Health.

“High temperatures for a prolonged period of time like we are experiencing can be dangerous,” said Dr. Dwelle. “Anyone can suffer from heat-related illness, but some people are at a higher risk, especially infants and children to age 4, people 65 and older, people who are overweight and those who have health conditions or take certain medications. In addition, those who exert themselves during work or exercise need to make sure they don’t become dehydrated.”

The Department of Health offers the following hot weather safety tips:

- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Avoid liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar, as they can cause you to lose more body fluid. The best thing to drink is water.
- Protect yourself.
  - People at high-risk for heat related illness should stay indoors in an air-conditioned place. If you don’t have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library – even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.
  - Low-income individuals with certain medical conditions who qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) may qualify for cooling assistance. The program can pay for a window air conditioner unit and professional installation. Individuals should contact their county social service office for more information.
  - If you are outside, rest often in the shade to give your body a chance to cool down.
  - Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses to protect yourself from the sun. Apply a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes before going outside, and reapply while outside according to package directions.

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200  
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: [health@nd.gov](mailto:health@nd.gov)

*Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).*

- Beat the Heat, Check the Backseat! One of the biggest weather related risks during the summer months is the possibility of a child dying in a vehicle from heat stroke. Parents and caregivers are reminded to always check the back seat before getting out a vehicle and to never leave children unattended in a vehicle – even for a few moments.

Heat stroke is a serious, life-threatening illness that occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. In heat stroke, the body's temperature rises rapidly, and the body stops sweating and cannot cool down. Warning signs vary but can include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees F, orally)
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately and then try to move into a cool place and cool the person with water using whatever methods you can (sponging with cool water, placing in a cool shower or a tub of cool water, or spraying with a garden hose).

For more information, contact Dr. John Baird or Dr. Terry Dwelle, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2372.

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